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REGENTS CONSIDER NEW ADMISSION STANDARDS FOR STATE UNIVERSITIES

BATON ROUGE -- By the year 2005, all state universities in Louisiana will be required to adopt admission standards for new entering freshmen, according to a proposed statewide master plan now being studied by the Louisiana Board of Regents, the coordinating and policy-making agency for all public postsecondary education in Louisiana.

At the Board's Jan. 4 meeting, Regents reviewed a staff presentation on proposed new admission standards and the creation of three selective admissions categories.

Student admissions standards for entering freshmen, beginning in the year 2005, would be based on components such as successful completion of the TOPS high school core curriculum, over-all grade-point average and ACT composite scores. Regents also are considering where students ranked in their senior graduating class as a possible admissions criteria.

"Today," said Commissioner of Higher Education Joseph Savoie, "we propose a dramatic change in the admission requirements to our four-year public universities beginning in the year 2005. Our goal is to create an environment that will help students be more successful once they reach college and to focus the resources of our colleges and universities on their primary missions. This is an ambitious plan that will change the nature of higher education in Louisiana."

Savoie said the Regents are taking this action now to give schools, school boards and next year's high school freshmen adequate time to prepare for the new admission standards. He and Regents staff will meet with state Department of Education officials in the coming weeks to discuss the plan.

Proposed admissions requirements at the three selective categories would be:

Selective I -- high school grade point average (GPA) greater than or equal to 3.0 and completion of TOPS high school core curriculum or an ACT composite score greater than or equal

to 25, completion of TOPS high school core curriculum and a minimum 2.0 GPA.

Selective II -- high school GPA greater than or equal to 2.5 and completion of the TOPS high school core curriculum or an ACT composite score greater than or equal to 23, completion of TOPS high school core curriculum and a minimum 2.0 GPA.

Selective III -- high school GPA greater than or equal to 2.0 and completion of the TOPS high school core curriculum or an ACT composite score greater than or equal to 20 and completion of TOPS high school core curriculum.

Students not meeting these requirements could attend the state's open-admissions community and technical college campuses for associate degrees, work-skills training, college remedial education or to prepare themselves to enter a four-year institution at a later date.

"Enrolling in the state's evolving community and technical college system," Savoie said, "is a cost effective way for the state to provide greater access to postsecondary education at a more affordable cost to students."

The commissioner also emphasized that if this plan is to be successful, the state must continue to expand the new community and technical college system. "These proposed admission standards will result in increased enrollment at our community and technical college campuses," Savoie told Regents. "That means we must be ready to provide the programs and facilities needed to serve these students."

In addition, the proposed new master plan effort will include the review of the role, scope and mission of each postsecondary institution, linking them to the new proposed admission standards. Items tied to each category include degree offerings, student enrollment patterns, research activity and public service responsibility.

Selective I institutions would offer a wide array of doctoral degree programs and conduct significant research activity. They must have a high percentage of graduate and upper level undergraduate students. Selective I universities would not offer developmental education or associate degree programs.

Selective II institutions will offer fewer doctoral programs and be expected to conduct less research activity than Selective I institutions. Students must not require more than one developmental education course. Associate degree programs would not be offered.

Graduate programs at **Selective III** institutions would be limited to those that meet regional or

state needs. Students at these institutions must not require more than one developmental education course and institutions would not offer terminal associate degree programs.

The proposed new master plan, which is scheduled for final board action at its March 22 meeting, consists of four parts: revision of funding formula to colleges and universities; specific goals, objectives and targets for all postsecondary education in Louisiana; admissions criteria for all four-year public universities; and clearly defined role, scope and mission statements for each institution.

“We are proposing a dramatic change,” Savoie said. “Change is uncomfortable and sometimes frightening but now is the time we must focus on what is best for our state. Louisiana needs more people with higher levels of education if we are to improve our state.”
